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THE NEW GENERATION

WHEN President Kennedy was accepting the grim task in his inaugural address of being one of the most powerful men on earth, two people younger than himself were beginning a tour of India and Pakistan.

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip are representatives of a nation without much material power—as that is reckoned today—and are visiting two nations that are recipients of much foreign aid. But the fact that they are there at all touches the founts of healing to be found wherever men have the human dignity to find them.

The British ruled India for virtually two hundred years. No one designed this, and no one intended it. It happened largely by chance; and it says much for the comparative small groups of governors, soldiers and civil servants, most of them now forgotten, that the head of the state from which they came should now be welcomed voluntarily by the people they ruled.

It says more for the people who receive them. Out of humiliation, human dignity, quite untouched, does not so much remember as finds no need to remember. The Indian people seem to remember only the higher intentions of some of the past rulers; of the friendship, for instance, of Lord Irwin and Gandhi.

The presence of the Queen and Prince Philip in India is the witness of the breaking of two ideologies, that of a nation that at one time thought its greatness lay in its power for domination; and that of a race which thought its strength lay in fighting humiliation. Both ideologies have vanished; something else has taken its place, the recognition of human dignity.

Ideologies

The spiritual disease of the world which President Kennedy almost directly addressed is that of ideologies—false beliefs which men think they ought to believe and through which they try to live. The address was delivered to the American people but it was delivered to a listening world also. The Kremlin was listening. The address spoke mostly in terms of ideologies. The ideologists were listening in the Kremlin. The address had to suppose that there was some fundamental division between the American and Russian peoples that had to be healed. What is it?

At one time there was a division between the British and the Indian peoples. It has vanished. The only question to be asked of it is, why did it ever exist? It seems fantastic now that Mr. Nehru should have been put into prison for years by a British government. And it

seems equally fantastic, now, that a government should have been thought of as wicked for putting him there. Mr. Nehru does not think that government to be wicked.

Period Pieces

The divisions were absurd. No one can now say exactly what their inner meaning was. They were period pieces. They have vanished as the dress of the period has vanished; but alas! as in all such historic divisions, leaving the dark trail of unnecessary human suffering behind them.

If history is to be the prophet it is now fairly certain that the ideologies which divide the West from the East, and which formed the background of the President's address, will vanish as all the others have. They will become period pieces, forcing only the historian to ask why, and perhaps the philosopher to contemplate the often self-imposed tragedy of man. It is a sobering thought that the inaugural address that sounds so brave and new now will be more or less meaningless in the future without a special study of the times in which it was delivered.

The Lie

Nothing more splendid in terms of idealism ever came out of the U.S.A. than the "Fourteen Points" of President Wilson issued during the first world war. What does President Kennedy's generation know of those? Except for the moral passion in them they have vanished. They were addressed in terms of ideology to a divided world, and the division now seems to be one of the dark inexplicable follies of mankind rather than anything else.

Communism is an ideology. It now speaks in clichés, precepts, and prophetic hope, and falls into brutal cruelties. Capitalism is an ideology. It speaks in terms of idealism, brotherhood, and help, and delivers itself, too, to brutal cruelties. The supposition that the hub of mankind's life is to be found in an irreconcilable division between what Russians believe and the peoples of the West believe is a denial of the basic fact of human dignity.

How can that dignity be found and released? How can the lie of the imprisonment of Pasternak's friend—the literal lie of the imprisonment—be destroyed. (The lie against the human spirit that a woman must be secretly put away because she denies the ideology of the state). How can the lie of the negro status in Georgia be ended? The lie of the dominance in Algeria? The many lies that still exist in the British Commonwealth? How can the

cheap divisions be ended and the passion for truth for its own sake be released?

Those are the real questions for the new (and ever old) generation.

WHAT THEN DO WE BELIEVE? AN AMERICAN UNITARIAN'S ANSWER

(The autumn number of "Faith And Freedom" contained a long article by David B. Parke, a Unitarian American minister, with the heading "The Integrity of Unitarianism". Below there are printed two extracts. Those interested in the whole article should obtain the autumn number of "Faith and Freedom" from the Rev. Shirvell Price, 13 Shrewsbury Road, Bolton).

WHAT does a Unitarian believe in the twentieth century? The accepted answer to this question has not been an answer at all but a begging of the question, namely: "Unitarians believe differently, therefore it is impossible to say what any individual Unitarian believes, or all Unitarians believe, at a given time." This answer expresses the freedom that lies at the centre of historic and contemporary Unitarianism. It fails to indicate the profound, disciplined and affirmative (although varying) beliefs that Unitarians hold individually and together. This omission invites a conclusion on the part of non-Unitarians (and, for that matter of uninformed Unitarians) that we "don't believe anything". Some within our ranks make this claim with pride since it justifies their agnosticism. On the other hand the critics of Unitarianism in other communions, for whom belief is identical with fixed, normative or enforced belief (i.e., orthodoxy), echo it in the confidence that it disqualifies the Unitarians from membership in the religious community. The Unitarians themselves have been so busy with such matters as denominational growth and social action that they have not paused to consider the theological implications of their efforts. Even our religious education programme, so brilliant in conception and historic in outreach, has produced an "official" ideology that excludes certain assumptions, approaches and realms of experience, hence in its way has become an orthodoxy.

Finally, the Unitarian theologians, while concerning themselves with the relations of Unitarianism to Christian faith and to secular movements, have failed to consider in depth the meaning of our Unitarian faith today, hence have inadvertently abdicated their theological leadership to the interpreters of the Right (the Roman Catholics, the neo-orthodox Protestants and the "new" conservatives) and of the Left (the humanists and others who reject all theology as absurd). The inevitable consequence of this abdication has been a tendency within Unitarianism toward a humanistic or otherwise anti-theological position reflected among the clergy and laity, and in fact into the highest echelons of denominational administration. Thus is the fiction maintained that Unitarians believe nothing in particular, therefore probably nothing at all.

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What does a Unitarian believe? Another prevalent answer

IT CAN BE DONE!

TRY WITH SIX

A little more than half of the circulation of the *Inquirer* is distributed through the churches.

Less than one half of Unitarian Churches take weekly bundles.

A few weeks ago a congregation which had never ordered a bundle tried with six copies. The order has now gone up to eight.

A small matter? Certainly not. We hope that soon the order will go up again.

If your congregation takes no weekly bundle why not try with six?

Write to the Editor, The Inquirer, 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

to this question begins with the words: "I can tell you what a Unitarian doesn't believe, but to say what we do believe is another matter...." If it is so difficult to say what we do believe, how is it so easy to say what we do not believe? Clearly, this posture is indefensible. One can imagine the Unitarian spokesman continuing in some such words as, "For instance, we don't believe in the Trinity, in the divinity of Jesus, or in revelation of any kind." The point is not that a large percentage of contemporary Unitarians do believe in these things and are being misrepresented; the point is that these negations are spoken in ignorance of their valid meaning in the world view of historic religion. If a Unitarian, in confidently enumerating what Unitarians do *not* believe, is simply asked, in reference to each negation, the question "Why?" he will discover two things: first, that it is impossible to state what he does not believe without also affirming what he does believe, lest he find himself believing nothing; and second, he will discover himself thinking *theologically*, whereas it was theology itself that was being promiscuously denied in his original assertions. I think we can safely say that one who is satisfied to explain Unitarianism in terms of its negations simply has not thought about what he believes. Afraid to reveal his own shallowness and confusion he says: "Unitarians don't believe this," when he means "I don't know what I believe." Once again the result is misrepresentation of the Unitarian position and misunderstanding of our true character and power as a religious movement. The possibility also exists that some Unitarians may believe what one Unitarian speaking in the name of all Unitarians denies. What is undeniable is that only those Unitarians who have thought about their faith and have come to coherent and defensible conclusions with reference to it, can converse with its critics. Any young person or adult who has fallen in with an informed Roman Catholic, fundamentalist or agnostic knows how painfully true this is.

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There is truth in America in 1960—the truth of prosperity, of democracy, of freedom, but rather than love there is defensiveness towards ourselves and contempt toward others. I am aghast at the snobbery of some American senators and congressmen toward other peoples—as if the melting-pot America of the last three centuries had included only white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. There is no love of humanity, no sense of the brotherhood of man in such men—only a compulsion to climb to power on the backs of the oppressed. Where is the great heart of America? Surely not in its statesmen—perhaps in its young, its thoughtful and its poor. America may survive through selfishness, but the world will not prosper by following our example. Only as we learn to give will we receive, and only as we express without compromise the goodness that is in us to a perplexed and hungry race can we expect their approbation of our sins. For we need the world's people more than they need us. We need them to accept us not for our gifts but for our faith. They know the difference even if we do not. And the time is short, so short for us to choose one over the other.

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It is my thesis that as conversation is the fulfillment of knowledge, so confession is the fulfillment of relationship. That man to whom I can tell my inmost secrets is my friend, and that woman who accepts me in spite of my weaknesses is the woman I love. It is always thus. The confessional relationship in my opinion is the most serious loss to Protestantism in consequence of the Reformation—more serious than the loss of the sovereign church or the apostolic succession. I do not mean to suggest that confession should be reinstated, or that Protestant pastoral counselling is an inadequate substitute. I only suggest that by removing confession—whether to a minister-priest, to one's neighbour or to God—from the centre of religious life we have yielded a most potent and productive channel for the deepening of faith. To whom do we confess our sin? The starkness of the question reflects the depth of the confusion out of which it is asked.

Fulfillment may consist less in attainment than in acceptance. To attain is to grasp, but to be accepted is to be grasped. To judge another is to lord over, but to be judged is to be released from one's own deception and falsehood. To confess is to cleanse the heart of impurity and wickedness; to receive confession is to share the inmost secrets of a man and to bear his sins in love.

The integrity of Unitarianism in the next fifty years may depend on the adequacy of its mechanisms of confession—that is, of its clergy, its churches, its channels of faith. How does a shallow people achieve depth?—by admitting their shallowness! How does a faithless people achieve faith?—by admitting their faithlessness! To cling to shallowness and faithlessness is to court intellectual and moral suicide, but the temptation will be great. I hope that our relationships may grow to embrace this most perfect expression of the sundered man made whole and the captive man made free—confession, the yielding of self to God, the recurring restitution of the soul to its Divine integrity.

A LAYMAN'S DIARY

January 11. Three remarkable bits of television tonight. I don't make a habit of watching *Val Parnell's Startime*, but I did make an effort on this occasion, because the "star" was Eartha Kitt. Being a star is not the same thing as being an artist (an artist, like an elephant, is hard to define, but easy to recognise); however, Miss Kitt is undoubtedly an artist. Indeed, she had to be, to surmount the banality of some of her songs (such as *I Want to be Evil* and *Mack the Knife*), which she presumably includes only because her public demands them of her. And only an artist could sandwich a quiet soliloquy from the *Song of Solomon* in between *My Heart Belongs to Daddy* and *Beale Street Blues* without incongruity: far from sounding out of place, the familiar words, "... I am black but comely ... the time of the singing of birds is come ..." seemed perfectly right where they were. (My copy of *Helps to the Study of the Bible* (1933) tells me that "the canonicity of the *Song* is not wholly unchallenged", which must rank high among the world's understatements.)

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Next came a masterpiece of documentary which I had missed on its first showing: *Borrowed Pastures*, a record of the uphill, sad struggle of two Polish ex-soldiers to run a derelict farm in Wales. The camera cavedrops compassionately on their daily efforts to keep going without help, and without any particular skill, sustained only by rare letters from Poland, and by the visit, once a year, of a Polish priest to celebrate Mass. The prose-poem commentary by John Ormond avoided romance and heroics; yet the film was a testimony to man's limitless powers of fortitude in adversity. I shall watch it again and again, if I have the chance.

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And then came what should, on paper, have been the climax of the evening, a filmed conversation between Karl Barth and the Rev. Vernon Spurgeon, of BBC religious television. "Flashes of humour and wit", the *Radio Times* promised us; but at the end I had only a picture of an old man courteously talking to an intruder when he would have been much happier composing the next volume of his *Church Dogmatics*. Barth smokes, he revels in Mozart, he reads detective novels, and he regards his relationship with Emil Brunner as a tug-of-war between an elephant and a whale (hardly the simile of a humble man). More than that I cannot recall. He had told the BBC men that he could give them two hours of his time, snatched from his all-important writing. In the event, he gave them four hours. Odd, that a man who is so sure that he possesses the truth did not jump to seize the unique opportunity of spreading that truth to millions of people through television. But no: he felt it more important to add a few more pages to a row of volumes which only a few specialists will ever read.

(There will be a television interview with Emil Brunner in the BBC religious programme *Firepoint* on Wednesday, February 8th. Better luck then, perhaps?)

January 15. In *Meeting Point* (BBC religious television) Richard Hoggart visited Bradfield College to have a look at public school life and religion in an Anglican-founded boys' boarding school. There was an excellent relaxed discussion in the middle of the 25-minute broadcast between the headmaster and a handful of sixth-formers (how far were they really representative, I wonder?). I liked the bold young man who stuck to his view that "house prayers" were boring. The headmaster, with unexpected frankness, deplored the "rootlessness" which was an inevitable result of boarding school life. It was a comfortable programme; but Richard Hoggart was wasted—he took no more part in the proceedings than any routine microphone-pusher could have done. At some point, he should have been allowed to put in his oar; better still, I should like to have been able to hear the conversation between him and his BBC colleagues back at the local inn, when they had recorded the broadcast and were able to swap personal impressions among themselves. As it was, we were rather left in the air.

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In "Sayings of the Week" the *Sunday Times* quotes the following utterance of the Bishop of Southwark: "A great deal of sentimental nonsense is talked about child psychiatry, and maybe a little old-fashioned discipline would be more effective." I don't know the context of these words—perhaps they are reaching us, slightly muffled, through the mantle of Dean Inge in the *Evening Standard*—but I find it hard to imagine any context in which they would make any kind of sense. Dr. Stockwood is reputed to be "progressive", so perhaps he feels that he should occasionally make reactionary noises to show that he is still in touch with the man in the street. Has he ever, I wonder, had a quiet heart-to-heart talk with a child psychiatrist and really listened? And, when he talks of "old-fashioned discipline" does he mean (as do most people who use that loaded phrase) "large adults self-righteously hitting small children"? If not, what does he mean?

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January 16. I am rarely carried away by fantasy on the stage: the plays of Christopher Fry leave me cold, and Anouilh and Cocteau have usually been almost synonymous in my experience. So it was with some apprehension that I went tonight to see the Stratford company's *Ondine* (produced by Peter Hall) at the Aldwych Theatre in London. I need not have worried. The tragic love-story of the rugged knight errant (Richard Johnson) and the water-sprite Ondine (Leslie Caron) was airborne from the very start, and one was never conscious that these were just actors, walking about on boards and speaking lines.

The finest part, I thought, was the trial scene in the last act, which conjured up most convincingly the genuine fear of "spirits" that was an everyday reality in mediaeval life. For the first time I felt that fear, and did not just recognise it intellectually.

The Stratford-Aldwych venture is the nearest thing to a National Theatre that has been offered to us for many a year. It was encouraging to see a great proportion of young people in the audience; and one could sense that they had not come just to see the star of Gipsy.

AUSTRALIAN COMMENTARY

THE TIMES OF NEW BEGINNINGS

By Tom Wardle

I BORROW for the title of this article a phrase from the *Inquirer* leader of December 31, 1960. The editor has appealed for ministers in the "new forties or forties" to think deeply about the future of the Unitarian movement.

The proposals here set out must be brief, and therefore more polemical-sounding than if expanded at length. They arise from a stream-of-consciousness attempt to discover what is the Unitarian

doctrine of salvation and especially from grappling with the ideas of universal and particular revelation.

Towards the centre

Reinhold Niebuhr is an outstanding theologian who has returned from neo-orthodoxy to liberalism, as I have myself moved from liberal universalism to a more emphatic Christian position. These trends are characteristic of a widespread centripetal movement from right and left in the Christian world towards the centre, Jesus Christ.

In a recent *Christian Century* article, "How my mind has changed", Reinhold Niebuhr writes: "Any analysis of the human situation which takes account of the inevitability of egotistic motives corrupting even the highest aspirations, including religious ones, has broken with the liberal moralism of the 19th century which long dominated both secular and religious idealism, in Europe ending with World War I and in our own nation with the great depression."

"The death of such liberalism does not preclude the necessity of preserving some of the values of the liberal tradition, such as the freedom to subject all historical and dogmatic statements to rigorous inquiry, and the spirit of toleration in dealing with one's opponents."

"When I find neo-orthodoxy turning into sterile orthodoxy or a new Scholasticism, I find that I am a liberal at heart... the Jesus of the prophetic tradition is important, though I believe in the 'Christ of faith', the Christ of the faith that brought the church into being and which broadly stated, rests on the idea that the drama of Christ's life and death and resurrection is more than the tragic death of a noble hero; it is a drama in which the human situation and the divine mystery are ultimately and definitively revealed."

"The divine mystery is concerned with the relation of mercy to judgment. It speaks to the human situation, to the fact that we have all fallen short of God's demands upon us, and that ultimately considered there is no moral solution for the moral imperfection of all men, tainted as the idealism of all men is with self-interest."

Bankruptcy of idealism

This discovery of the bankruptcy of idealism and the idolatry of elevating it into a religion has been one of the most painful but salutary discoveries of my ministry. It is what makes Humanism the danger that it is to truth and love, because it is based on a sham. The Christian Gospel is realistic in its recognition of the common sinfulness of all men and the necessity to subject all our actions and ideals to the judgment of God.

I cannot escape the conclusion that the realistic, Godly and meaningful element in Unitarianism will be lost altogether and the Movement be given over to an avowed or disguised Humanism unless this fanciful nonsense about the exclusively noble, creative and self-authenticating nature of man is abandoned and we acknowledge that it is only by the "persuasion of God's Spirit" that "the resistance of our passion, indolence or fear" may be laid to rest.

Concrete proposals

The concrete proposals that I would like to put forward for the consideration of the Movement at this time are therefore:—

(a) A Movement-wide study of the nature of man as discussed in twentieth-century theology and the Biblical record.

(b) A similar study of the relationship of the "Jesus of history" to the "Christ of faith" as it is considered in current Biblical criticism.

(c) An honest enquiry into the contrasts and comparisons between Christianity and other world religions (cf., e.g., Bouquet's "World religions and the Christian faith").

(d) An undertaking by every Unitarian to read at least the Gospel of Mark and the Epistle to the Romans from beginning to end (in the Phillips translation for preference) and discuss them in their church groups.

(e) Encouragement and training in the practice of family and private prayer.

(f) The initiation, at G.A. Council level, of discussions with the Congregational Union as to the possibilities of closer association.

(g) More participation in the affairs of the World Council of Churches, locally and nationally.

For a universally-toned, liberal Christianity the future could be creatively abundant. Our recovery will begin when we start to read our Bibles again.

DOES GOD NEED OUR FORGIVENESS?

By Malcolm Rutt

VERY many sermons are preached from pulpits of all denominations about our need at all times for "God's forgiveness"; but it strikes me as interesting and not a little curious that during the course of a long life I have never heard a sermon preached which has declared that God needs *our* forgiveness as human beings.

We in the pews are so often told by the preacher that God has given us "freewill"; that we have the capacity and the power to choose either "good" or "evil". Well, there it is! If God has created us with this creative urge within us towards either good or evil, and we fall into some evil mess, then surely God has to share the responsibility and needs our "forgiveness", inasmuch as we are told that He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and at the same time a God of Love!

There is, however, as I see it, a way out of this dilemma. If we start off by refusing to consider God as either omnipotent or omniscient, but as One with the developing evolutionary creative process of the universe, then it surely becomes possible to think of Him as always *developing with us*—learning from our mistakes more about our humanity; while we by our aspirations and strivings are always learning more about His divinity; He always becoming more human; we always becoming more divine. Is this what Jesus meant when he said "the kingdom of God is within you", and called to us to "love God with all our mind"? I am inclined to think that it is. At any rate it makes some kind of sense, whereas the other theory does not. Isn't it Christian Humanism? I like to think that it is.

I have put this whole question to various preachers for their consideration, and all I have received from them by way of response is the suggestion that I am guilty of *blasphemy* in criticising God in any way whatsoever. This suggestion I wholeheartedly repudiate. I believe that as human beings we have the basic human right to examine critically the whole orthodox religious structural set-up. It is our privilege and indeed our duty to exercise our personal private judgment, our reason, and sort out all the various functions, qualities, and attributes which men have associated and are associating with the term "God"; and when we consider God is being presented to us in an impossible, erroneous, or immoral light, then we have a perfect right to say so. As I see it, it is the "orthodox" folk who in so many instances are called upon to meet the charge of "blasphemy"; for God is not a god of dead traditional dogma, but of living evolutionary process. Religion is not accepting something static, but creating something dynamic.

Man is not in the universe by permission; he is a vital essential part of the evolutionary creative life which is always a process of ideals being hammered out on the anvil of experience. And in this experience through which we have come and into which we have still to go, God is involved equally with ourselves; with ourselves He is always becoming.

The author of the Fourth Gospel put into the mouth of Jesus the statement "I and my Father are one". In my view that is true of us all as human beings in a universe that is always expanding in an activity of "continuous creation"; in which there is no "Alpha and Omega", but always the development of new truth. Man is continually being "crowded with glory and worship"; he is always becoming more worshipful.

I have written about this deep subject colloquially. I am sure that is just how it should be talked about.

DR. WEATHERHEAD AND REBIRTH

By J. K. Gandy

A RECENT broadcast by Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, "frankly speaking" to interviewers on the BBC Home Service, about the value of religion in coping with the problems of life, calls to mind his most fascinating little work on Rebirth, published during 1960. One of the most broad-minded and effective of modern clergymen, the great value of his contribution lies in his experience of helping people cope with the stress of life (at the psychiatric clinic under his care, whilst at the London City Temple), and in the opportunities of investigating the nature of man's mind, that this combined religious and psychological work afforded him.

It is perhaps important to remember, before considering Dr. Weatherhead's researches into the subject of Rebirth, that the belief has been more or less universal to man throughout the ages, and that it was held by the early Christian Fathers until a Church Council pronounced against it, by a 3 to 2 majority, in the 6th Century. Even then, Origen, St. Augustine, and St. Francis of Assisi accepted it. It is, of course, taken for granted by the Eastern wisdom as a whole, Buddhist and Hindu. Perhaps more interesting from a Unitarian point of view is that Ralph Waldo Emerson, strongly supported the belief in Rebirth.

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Dr. Weatherhead (who is interested in Rebirth particularly on account of its great value in helping people to bear and understand the difficulties and heartbreaks of life) opens his case by noting that the belief formed part of the religious background accepted in New Testament times. The Essenes taught it, and the historian Josephus wrote of the Jewish belief that "the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies". Jesus certainly seemed to take the doctrine for granted in such passages as Matthew 11/14, where he tells his disciples that John the Baptist was Elijah, and again in Matthew 16/13 we learn that the Jews of the day regarded Jesus as Jeremiah or one of the prophets. The inner teaching was, however, reserved by him for the inner groups of disciples (the 70 and the 500) as too "strong meat" for most people of his day and age.

Most interesting is the catalogue of philosophers and poets who (relying on their intuition, or thinking for themselves) have expressed their convictions on the subject. There are so many that one cannot quote them all, but Plato for example writes: "knowledge easily acquired is that which the enduring self had in an earlier life". Confucius speaks of "those who are born wise", and our own Poet Laureate, John Masefield, declares:

"I hold that when a person dies
His soul returns again to earth".

Poets too numerous to mention have echoed these lines, especially the ones deeply concerned with the meaning of life, such as Robert Browning and Walt Whitman, and modern clergymen of even the more orthodox persuasions (like Dean Inge of St. Paul's) have declared their firm belief, in similar words.

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Dr. Weatherhead goes on to consider what light Rebirth throws on the mysteries of Christian teaching as a whole. It is clear that many people never have a chance of making good—especially was this true in former times, and over most of the globe it is still painfully true today. Injustice is terribly apparent in life, but not if we extend the "as ye sow, so shall ye reap" parable over more than one life.

On the other hand there is the opposite case of the genius and prodigy (whether in music, like Mozart Yehudi Menuhin, or in the intellectual sphere, where such as John Stuart Mill, the philosopher, could master foreign languages while still an infant). Such people seem to start already provided with arts and talents that others have to acquire, with laborious practice, over a long period of years. They are, as Confucius noted in his Analects, "born wise". Many of us thought that a fair system of education would do something to produce more of these

prodigies, and reduce the number of unaccountable failures, but in fact it has made the ascending scale of human evolution all the more apparent. To a large extent, we seem to be "born, not made", what we are. Viewed in this light, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, though certainly exaggerated, does not look so unaccountable, and the same may be said of the Port-Royal movement in France, to which many of the brightest spirits of the age gave their allegiance. We can even understand the apparent contradiction between their belief in destiny on the one hand, and their great personal efforts to improve it on the other, since the point from which they had started was itself the result of their previous effort. Perhaps this holds the key to many of our problems today.

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It would take up too much space in such a restricted review as this to do justice to even one of the cases cited by Dr. Weatherhead as evidence in support of Rebirth. Medical specialists are gathering more and more information on the subject. There is, however, one class of case which affords abundant data, and that is the rebirth of children, shortly after their death, often to the same parents, with memories of their previous life. Many cases are on record. The type of instance where adults are granted insight into their previous existences is rarer, but Air Marshal Dowling recounts a fascinating experience in his book "Lychgate", and Professor Stevenson of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry in Virginia University has collected a variety of evidence in his book "Evidence for Survival". Such well-known writers as John Buchan in his book "Memory hold the Door", and Rudyard Kipling, provide much first-hand data from the layman's point of view.

The many cases where Rebirth has provided the only clue to understanding the suffering of human life, often hardest upon those who seem most innocent (such as tiny children cut off by violent death shortly after birth, or the mass victims of an earthquake disaster), are balanced by those other cases where people feel that their fate has been so hard that they could not face the idea of renewed experience of earth life. These are the very cases, however, which are most illuminated by the extended doctrine of "as ye sow, so shall ye reap", for when justice has been satisfied (the Greeks symbolised this by the myth of the Furies), there is then no impediment to our progress through the happier phases of earthly life. It is doubtless mainly for our good that we should look forward rather than back, and so avoid Tennyson's

"As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood
And ebb into a former life. . . ."

but there are certainly times in the experience of most of us when we could derive great succour and comfort from a consideration of the possibility of rebirth.

"The Case For Reincarnation" by Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, C.B.E., is published by M. C. Peto, 16 Kingswood Road, Tadworth, Surrey. Price 1s. 3d.

IT OCCURRED TO ME

By Marjell Hilton

THE first weeks of a new year are quiet, reflective ones as far as I am concerned. The excitement, the bright colour of Christmas is a fading memory, and there is an uneventful period before Spring breaks in upon us. This is the time of the year that I spend more time "looking before and after" and this year especially my mind is hovering over the past as it is ten years since Mr. Waddington asked me if I would consider undertaking the charge of the Maidstone Church with, of course, the consent of the congregation.

Ten years is a long time in one's life, and I had no idea when meeting the congregation on a snow-bound afternoon that after so long we should still be together. Some of the elders have passed on leaving precious memories with us; we have had other members fill the ranks, and of course there have been, as in all communities, bewildering experiences and grey disappointments. But certain impressions remain with the years. Many of the members have had terrifying outbreaks to face and we have seen them emerge triumphantly, sustained by

their faith, the loving support of their friends and with an added spiritual stature. We have really felt a sense of "the beloved community". The loyalty and devotion of the members to their church is indeed wonderful and I shall always look upon these last ten years as the most richly rewarding and deeply satisfying of my life.

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One of the most compelling novels I have read in the year that has just passed is "All in a Lifetime", by Walter Allen. It is an absorbing book that evokes seventy years of English working-class life, its bitter struggles and its rise to power and widening opportunity. Billy Ashted who reviews his life in old age tells his personal story against the background of political struggle. He is a working man who, though having done some street-corner speaking for the I.L.P., does not think of himself as a politician. His close friendship with a brilliant labour leader reveals trends of working-class aspiration, and this friendship I found deeply moving. There are some fine passages especially of his experiences as a youth on an immigration ship to America and his stay in New York. It is a deeply satisfying book, full of observation and rich with comment on the religious and political trends of the last seventy years. A book to linger over!

A film above all others that I have enjoyed is "Inherit the Wind". It is based on a true incident in American history—the case of a young school teacher who taught Darwin's theory of evolution to his class and was bitterly opposed by the whole town who were bigoted fundamentalists. The trial which made history is surely one of the most memorable in all film making. It is the battle between opposing attitudes of mind—the right of a man to speak the truth freely as he sees it and the enslavement of the closed mind bound to tradition. I am keenly looking forward to seeing it again.

★

My preference in poetry is that which is simple, direct and has a singing quality. I have just read "The Witnesses" and other poems by Clive Sansom and have deeply appreciated the clarity and beauty of this poetry, writing many of them out in my personal anthology. The book contains all the poems written in the last twenty years that the poet wishes to preserve.

"The Witnesses", one of three long poems selected by the Arts Council of Great Britain, is often included in verse-speaking recitals and competitions, and I imagine is used frequently in our pulpits. Clive Sansom is a Quaker and silence has a special significance for him. I especially liked "Quaker Meeting". These are the last lines:—

The spirit frees itself and goes
Where the eternal spirit flows,
Where out of stillness, may be heard
The formative, unspoken word,
Creative, moveless; and we come
Into the heart of silence, home.

Correspondence

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer"
14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in
general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

Freedom not enough

Sir: The Rev. J. B. Tonkin's interesting letter in your issue of January 14th raises a query in my mind. He suggests that "the creative foundation from which new forms of communion and activity must emerge is the passionate affirmation that a 'true religion'—Unitarianism—is one completely unfettered by any external authority".

I agree with him that "it is this affirmation . . . that is definitive of Unitarianism in our present age"—that is, if one adds the companion principles of reason and tolerance. This freedom is the breath of life to me, and I believe that the mental atmosphere of an "orthodox" church would stifle me now. It is the pre-requisite of spiritual and intellectual progress.

Yet I submit that few of us can remain passionately excited for very long about the mere fact of freedom as such. It provides, after all, no more than an empty (though essential) framework which

each of us must fill with a positive content of faith evolved from his own experience and his reflections upon the experience of others. And the trouble is that each of us, having a different experience of life, develops a different faith. Even where (did we but realise it) we do share a fundamentally similar faith with our brother Unitarian, we are apt to repudiate indignantly for ourself the language in which he seeks to express it.

The sincerity which freedom makes possible is our undoubted strength, but when it comes to attempting concerted action to present Unitarianism as a gospel for the world, our diversity of belief and utterance is an undeniable weakness. This is a weakness we have to accept, and within its limits we have to work. We can by no means get rid of it, for it is inherent in the anarchic nature of our own chief principle of unfettered freedom.

Indispensable though it may be to us all, it is not freedom about which each Unitarian feels passionately, but rather the positive convictions it has given him the means of achieving. Nor can we present the mere possession of intellectual liberty as our gospel to the world, for the churchless individual can retort that he already enjoys as much of this kind of liberty outside our churches as he would within them. But when he realises that we accept the responsibility of freedom to use our brains and act upon our insights, then he may be attracted. The sincerity and integrity of Unitarians will always be our greatest asset.

Wakefield and Lydgate.

Yours, Lawrence Chandler.

"Praying for Reunion"

Sir: It is unfortunate that the Rev. Basil Viney rounds off his article: "Praying for Reunion" (21.1.61) by grinding the pacifist axe.

To bracket Unitarianism with Quakerism and the Gandhian movement, on the side of pacifism, is to test unnecessarily the tolerance of the many non-pacifist Unitarians, and to deter potential Unitarians by giving them an entirely false idea of our principles. To be honest, we must agree to differ on this sore point, if we must, whilst avoiding personal animosities like the plague.

To force the French-American Catholic, Maurin, and the Mahatma, into an irrelevant burling against the Pope and Archbishop Fisher, seems an unusual way of promoting harmony.

Edinburgh.

Yours, T. G. M. Guise.

A Request

Sir: May I request the courtesy of your columns to invite any of your readers who have copies of Alexander Gordon's "Heads of Unitarianism" on their shelves to give them to our library at Essex Hall.

This book is long out of print, but it is invaluable in the study of Unitarian history. We have just launched the courses for Lay Preachers and this is one of the books we need. It will be loaned to students who will return it on the completion of the course, thus making it available to other students. So any reader who can send me a copy will be rendering an invaluable service to our movement.

We also require a number of Wilbur's two-volume "Unitarian Heritage" and if any of your readers feel generously disposed enough to let us have this book, a good deal of expense would be saved, for this, too, is required for the Lay Preachers' Course.

Essex Hall, Essex Street,
Strand, London, W.C.2.

Yours sincerely, John Kirby,
Secretary.

News Review

SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A meeting of the Department was held at Essex Hall on January 16th under Chairmanship of Rev. I. C. Whitham.

Religious Instruction Study

It was reported nearly eight hundred forms were in circulation. To date over a hundred had been returned, and fifty per cent. of these were from teachers who were Unitarians.

It was felt that there must be many more Unitarians who are teachers who could help in completing the questionnaire and that many who have received the same and not completed the answers should be reminded.

The Department hopes ministers will help in securing additional answers so the study may be really comprehensive. Copies of the questionnaire may be had from Rev. Arthur Peacock.

Gallies

It was reported that ministers had been provided with a booklet

(continued on page 855)

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Miscellaneous

"By A Way I Knew Not." Anonymous pamphlet published by the Lindsey Press, 1928. Now out of print. Sixpence each, plus postage, will be paid for copies sent to Advertiser, 22, Mackie Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex.

DUPLICATING. Shorthand, Typing (Tapes, Etc.)
Private Lessons, Shorthand, Typing. Mabel Eyles, 10, Beaconsfield Road, Friern Barnet, N.11. ENT 3324.

(Continued from page 854)

setting out measures individuals and organisations can take under the new Betting Act if it is thought undesirable that premises be used for betting offices.

The Department felt all Church Secretaries ought to be aware of the situations that need to be watched in their districts and steps are to be taken to ensure wider distribution of this information.

Discussion took place on the practice of games like Tombola being played on church premises for the purpose of fund-raising. The Department feels this is very undesirable as is also the practice of letting halls to private individuals and societies sponsoring such activities.

Sunday Observance

In view of the likelihood of new legislation regarding organised games and entertainments on Sundays it was decided to make this the topic for discussion at the annual meeting in Assembly week. The Secretary of the Department will introduce the subject—"How should we observe Sunday?"

Road Safety

The Department hopes all congregations will co-operate in the above campaign which is to be launched shortly and details of which have been sent to all churches.

In particular, it would draw attention to the Service of Dedication to be held in St. Paul's Cathedral on Saturday, April 22nd, at noon.

Charles Alfred Williams

By the death of Mr. Charles Alfred Williams, in his 88th year, the congregation at Richmond Hill Church, Ashton-under-Lyne have lost a member who gave more than half-a-century's zealous support to the cause and for forty-three years successively held the offices of Sunday School secretary, Church secretary and Church treasurer. Mr. Williams also took an active interest in the work of the East Cheshire Union, and to mark their appreciation of his service the Union, two or three years ago, elected him to life-membership, a distinction he shared with Mrs. Williams.

J.H.S.

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TEL.: EUS 7354 Editorial: EUS 2912

Holidays

UNITARIAN TOURS: Norway (June 17th—July 1st) Brunnen or Davos (August 6th—19th). Anyone wishing to attend I.A.R.F. Congress at Davos can do so. Lone travellers welcome. Enquire: Rev. Parkinson, 10a Westbourne Grove, Scarborough.

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THE LONDON DISTRICT AND SOUTH-EASTERN PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

The Winter Quarterly Meeting

will be held at

LEWISHAM UNITARIAN CHURCH
HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E. 13

on February 4th at 3 p.m.

MEETING

Mr. A. Blake, President of the
General Assembly

SERVICE

Rev. T. L. Jones

The new Chapel at Lewisham will be opened by the Mayor
of Lewisham during the afternoon

Frederick Green Wisey

A Unitarian of long standing, Frederick Green Wisey died at his home at Chislehurst on January 12, at the age of 92. A protégé of the late Donald Fraser in his days in Bristol, Mr. Wisey was the headmaster of an elementary school in that city before his retirement nearly thirty years ago. Later he lived in Oxford, where he was a regular attendee at the Chapel of Manchester College, and afterwards settled in Brighton, where he was a subscribing member of Christ Church (Unitarian), New Road, though increasing frailty prevented him from being more than an occasional attendee at its services. Some three years ago he settled in a residential hotel at Chislehurst, near his daughter and son-in-law.

The funeral service, in the chapel of the Buckingham Crematorium, Elmers End Road, was conducted by the Rev. John Rowland of Brighton, a friend of over thirty years' standing; the principal mourners were Mr. and Mrs. Colin Emms of Bromley (son-in-law and daughter). Among the others present was Mrs. Rowland, also a friend of several years.